

REMARKS

Claims 1-71 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In the latest Office Action, claims 1-50, 52-54, 64, and 66-71 were rejected, and claims 51, 55-63, and 65 were objected to. With this amendment, claims 1, 3, 4, 23, 25, 26, 45, 46, 50, 64, 66, 68, and 71 are amended, and new claims 72-111 are presented.

I. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-44, 50, 64, and 66-71 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicants regard as their invention.

Claim 1 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the communication devices” in line 4. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. The MPEP explains that “the failure to provide explicit antecedent basis for terms does not always render a claim indefinite. If the scope of a claim would be reasonably ascertainable by those skilled in the art, then the claim is not indefinite.” MPEP 2173.05(e). Claim 1 recites in lines 1-2, “service locations, each service location having a communication device.” Although claim 1 introduces “a communication device” in the singular, the claim recites that each of the service locations has a communication device. Therefore, although there is not express antecedent basis for “communications devices” (i.e., in the plural form), anyone skilled in the art would reasonably ascertain that there are a plurality of communications devices recited.

Claim 1 was also rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitations “the service attendants” and “the messages.” Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite “the primary service attendant” and “the message,” each in the singular form.

Claim 3 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the slot management system.” This limitation has been amended to “the gaming machine management system,” the antecedent basis for which is found in base claim 1.

Claim 4 was rejected as being confusing. Claim 4 has been amended to recite, “the communication system is a two-way messaging system, whereby the message receivers can transmit and receive messages.”

Claim 23 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the service attendants.” Applicants have amended the claim to recite “the primary service attendant” in the singular form.

Claim 25 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the slot management system.” This limitation has been amended to “the gaming machine management system,” the antecedent basis for which is found in base claim 23.

Claim 50 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the time.” It is respectfully asserted that servicing an event inherently takes a time; therefore claim 50 is not indefinite. MPEP 2173.05(e) (“Inherent components of elements recited have antecedent basis in the recitation of the components themselves”). However, Applicants have amended claim 50 to recite “a time” to further the application to allowance.

Claim 64 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the primary service attendant.” Applicants have amended this limitation to “the first service attendant,” which has its antecedent basis in base claim 46.

Claim 66 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the measure.” Applicants have amended that limitation to “a measure.”

Claim 68 was rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the service location.” Applicants have amended the preamble to recite “a service location.” Claim 68 was also rejected for failing to provide a sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the selected service attendant.” Applicants have amended the claim to recite, “selecting a service attendant for servicing each scheduled event,” to provide an antecedent basis for the “the selected service attendant” limitation.

At the Examiner’s invitation, Applicants have additionally amended claims 23 and 26 to address additional informalities. Applicants have also addressed the Examiner’s concerns regarding informalities in the newly submitted claims. These amendments are not believed or intended to change the scope of any of the claims, but rather to address the Examiner’s rejections.

II. Art Rejections

Claims 1, 4-9, 23, 26-31, 45-50, 52-54, 68-69, and 71 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,774,877 to Patterson et al. It is noted with appreciated that the Examiner indicated claims 51, 55-63, and 65 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. It is further noted that claims 2-3, 10-22, 24-25, 32-44, 64, 66-67, and 70 stand rejected under § 112 only. Because these rejections have been addressed and overcome by the present amendments, these claims also recite allowable subject matter.

Independent claim 1 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 2, with a slight additional amendment. This further amendment is not intended to change the scope of the claim, but rather to specify that it is the communications devices that communicate the game events.

Because original claim 2 was allowable (barring the now-corrected § 112 deficiencies), amended claim 1 and claims 3-22, which depend from claim 1, are now in condition for allowance.

Similarly, independent claim 23 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 24, with a slight additional amendment. This further amendment is not intended to change the scope of the claim, but rather to specify that it is the communications devices that communicate the game events. Because original claim 24 was allowable (barring the now-corrected § 112 deficiencies), amended claim 23 and claims 25-44, which depend from claim 23, are now in condition for allowance.

Independent claims 45 and 46 have each been amended to include the limitations of claim 2, and further to specify that it is the communications devices that communicate the game events. It is believed that claims 45 and 46, as amended to include these limitations, are now allowable for similar reasons as amended claims 1 and 23.

Independent claim 68 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 70. Because original claim 70 was allowable (barring the now-corrected § 112 deficiencies), amended claim 68 and claim 69, which depends from claim 68, are now in condition for allowance.

In addition, original claims 10-22, 32-44, 51, 55-60, and 61-67 have been rewritten so as to not depend from any rejected base claims. As explained above, each of these claims has been indicated to be allowable or has been rejected solely on the basis of a corrected § 112 defect. For the Examiner's convenience, the following table is provided to show how the original claims correspond to the new rewritten claims.

Original Claim	Rewritten Claim	Original Claim	Rewritten Claim	Original Claim	Rewritten Claim	Original Claim	Rewritten Claim
10	72	20	82	39	92	58	102
11	73	21	83	40	93	59	103

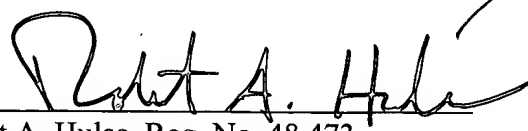
12	74	22	84	41	94	60	104
13	75	32	85	42	95	61	105
14	76	33	86	43	96	62	106
15	77	34	87	44	97	63	107
16	78	35	88	51	98	64	108
17	79	36	89	55	99	65	109
18	80	37	90	56	100	66	110
19	81	38	91	57	101	67	111

III. Conclusion

It is believed that the application is in condition for allowance of all claims, and therefore an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that for any reason direct contact with Applicants' representative would help advance the prosecution of this case to allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

The claims have been amended as follows:

1 1. (Amended) A system for providing service to customers at service
2 locations, each service location having a communication device adapted to communicate
3 one or more events pertaining to a service event for a customer at the service location, the
4 system comprising:

5 a decisioning system communicatively coupled to the communication devices
6 to receive the events, and including a plurality of rules for scheduling
7 the events for service, the decisioning system selecting a primary
8 service attendant for servicing each event;

9 a communication system communicatively coupled to the decisioning system
10 to transmit a message to the primary service attendant selected for an
11 event, the message indicating the service location at which the event is
12 to be serviced; and

13 a plurality of message receivers, used by the primary service attendant[s], to
14 receive the message[s] from the communication system,

15 wherein the service locations are gaming machines, and the communication
16 devices are interface boards coupled to the gaming machines, the
17 communication devices for communicating game events to a gaming
18 machine management system.

1 3. (Amended) The system of claim [2] 1, wherein the gaming machines are
2 slot machines, and the interface boards communicate slot events to the [slot] gaming
3 machine management system.

1 4. (Amended) The system of claim 1, wherein the communication system is a
2 two-way messaging system, whereby [and] the message receivers can transmit and
3 receive messages [are two-way message receivers].

1 23. (Amended) A system for providing service to customers at plural service
2 locations, each service location having a communication means for communicating one
3 or more events pertaining to a service event for a customer at the service location the
4 system comprising:
5 a computer implemented decision making means communicatively coupled to
6 the plurality of communication means for receiving the events, the
7 decision making means scheduling a primary service attendant for
8 servicing each event using a plurality of rules;
9 a messaging means communicatively coupled to the decision making means
10 for transmitting a message to the primary service attendant selected for
11 an event, the message indicating the service location at which the
12 event is to be serviced; and
13 a plurality of message receiving means, used by the primary service
14 attendant[s], for receiving the message[s] from the messaging means,
15 wherein the service locations are gaming machines, and the communication
16 devices are interface boards coupled to the gaming machines, the
17 communication devices for communicating game events to a gaming
18 machine management system.

1 25. (Amended) The system of claim [24] 25, wherein the gaming machines
2 are slot machines, and the interface boards communicate slot events to the [slot] gaming
3 machine management system.

1 26. (Amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the communication system is
2 a two-way messaging system, whereby [and] the message receivers can transmit and
3 receive messages [are two-way message receivers].

1 45. (Amended) A system for servicing customers at [service locations]
2 gaming machines, the system comprising:
3 means for transmitting from a [service location] gaming machine to a gaming
4 machine management system a message pertaining to [an] a game
5 event at the [service location] gaming machine and for which a
6 customer at the [service location] gaming machine needs service by a
7 service attendant;
8 means for receiving the transmitted message;
9 means, coupled to obtain the transmitted message from the receiving means,
10 for scheduling the game event, using a plurality of scheduling rules,
11 for servicing by a service attendant;
12 means for selecting a first service attendant for servicing the scheduled event;
13 and
14 means for transmitting a message to the first service attendant identifying the
15 [service location] gaming machine to be serviced for the game event.

1 46. (Amended) A method of servicing customers at service locations, the
2 method comprising:
3 transmitting from a communication device at a service location a message
4 pertaining to an event at the service location and for which a customer
5 at the service location needs service by a service attendant;
6 receiving the transmitted message and scheduling the event, using a plurality
7 of scheduling rules, for servicing by a service attendant;
8 selecting a first service attendant for servicing the scheduled event; and
9 transmitting a message to the first service attendant identifying the service
10 location to be serviced for the event,
11 wherein the service locations are gaming machines, and the communication
12 device is an interface board coupled to a gaming machine, the

13 communication device for communicating game events to a gaming
14 machine management system.

1 50. (Amended) The method of claim 46, further comprising:
2 monitoring [the] a time taken to service the event; and
3 responsive to the time taken to service an event exceeding a threshold amount,
4 transmitting a message to another employee to notify of the incomplete
5 service.

1 64. (Amended) The method of claim 46, wherein the scheduling rules include:
2 at least one rule for messaging a supervisor of the [primary] first service
3 attendant if the [primary] first service attendant has not completed
4 servicing the event in a certain amount of time.

1 66. (Amended) The method of claim 46, further comprising:
2 receiving from the service location a customer identification number;
3 querying a customer database with the received customer identification
4 number to obtain [the] a measure of the customer's value; and
5 scheduling the event for service according to the obtained customer value.

1 68. (Amended) A method of servicing customers at a service location[s], the
2 method comprising:
3 receiving from the service location, event messages pertaining to service
4 location events;
5 scheduling selected events for servicing by service attendants using a plurality
6 of scheduling rules;
7 selecting a service attendant[s] for servicing each scheduled event; and
8 for each scheduled event, transmitting a message to the selected service
9 attendant identifying the service location to be serviced,

10 wherein the service locations are gaming machines, and the service location
11 events include a jackpot at a gaming machine.

1 71. (Amended) A system for providing service to customers at service
2 locations, wherein each service location having a communication device adapted to
3 communicate one or more events pertaining to the status of a customer at the service
4 location, the system comprising:
5 a decisioning system for scheduling the events for service, by receiving the
6 events from the communication devices and using a plurality of rules
7 to select a primary service attendant for servicing each event, to
8 produce a periodically updated event service schedule;
9 a communication system for transmitting a message to the primary service
10 attendant selected for an event, by way of a two-way communication
11 network, to produce a message indicating to the primary service
12 attendant the service location at which the event is to be serviced; and
13 a plurality of message receivers, each service attendant having one of the
14 message receivers, for receiving the message[s] from the
15 communication system, by way of the two-way communication
16 network, to produce to the service attendant to message,
17 wherein the service locations are gaming machines, and the communication
18 devices are interface boards coupled to the gaming machines, the
19 communication devices for communicating game events to a gaming
20 machine management system.